The word “town” has been selected to head this chapter in the sense in which it is used in the phrase “town and gown” or “town versus gown.” By it I mean to characterize not a political unit, a municipality, but a people, a different way of life. The religious life, lived behind the low and (like all such found in the New England countryside) crumbling stone wall which surrounded the Shadowbrook property, was one thing—we have seen something of it; the life lived in the Berkshires is quite another. Shadowbrook was a community within a community, and while to an extent, remarkable in this age of communications, it remained aloof, it was not unaffected by the life of the “world” around it.

Enough has been said about the Berkshires as a resort. This was necessary for it was the resort which brought the house into being, yet it would be a serious error to identify the resort with the Berkshires. The period of the millionaires was a frivolous interlude which has passed and revealed the essential rocky character of the hills and their people unmoved and unchanged.

The area in these northern Appalachians was our first frontier. We tend to mark our beginnings as a nation with the Revolution; and the more diffuse and bitter French and Indian War, which won North America for the English-speaking race, has, for that reason, a lesser part in our consciousness. Conse-
sequently, our concept of the frontier is larded with images of those later, further frontiers, where the Indians rode horseback and the white men were levied cavaliers. But the essential frontier was far different. Instead of open plains it was composed of myriad, small wooded pockets in the White and Green Mountains and the Berkshire and the Catskill Hills, and its Puritan frontiersmen were sworn enemies of all cavaliers. But it was the essential frontier, not merely because it was the first, which had to be won that history could take the course it has, but, because it was here that that strange forging of greed with consciousness of mission, which was the spirit of the frontier, was fashioned. The soberly dressed Christian of Stockbridge village in the mid-eighteenth century who went about his quiet chores and worried about salvation was enlisted in a war. The enemy was principally, of course, the romanish French who wished to seize this Land of Canaan from the Elect of Predeliction. But the strategy in this war as seen by the General Court in Boston was peculiarly indirect. The immediate objective was clear: to win the Six Nations of the Iroquois into firm allegiance to the English cause; but the plan of attack was devious. They, the Iroquois, must be
made good Congregationalists. If they accepted proselytizing, the war was over; for they would have nothing more to do with the papist French. If they did not, they could in good conscience be destroyed as the reprobates they were. To give the Indians their chance at salvation—and life—the General Court of Massachusetts supported the Indian Mission School at Stockbridge and in 1750 sent the famous Northampton divine, Jonathan Edwards, who had demonstrated his charismatic powers by instituting a religious revival in Northampton which had infected the entire Connecticut River Valley with salutary fear of the wrath to come.

The Berkshires’ heritage from their days as a frontier has not been a religious one, of course. Unrelieved Calvinism, if I am not mistaken, has lost popularity everywhere, and the Berkshires today show the same quilt-like variety of religious affiliation common throughout the United States. But the Calvinist mind was an independent mind, for how could a man who had, by concentration and cunning will, wrested from a reluctant God a conviction of his own righteousness submit to another’s, a mere man’s mind? While the Berkshires may not base their independent spirit any longer on a religiously held conviction of rectitude, they have remained independent—there is no other-directedness here, Mr. Reisman.

It is no great surprise to learn that the bloodiest incident in Shay’s Rebellion broke out simultaneously in Stockbridge and in Sheffield some days after the revolt had been effectively suppressed and the cause was hopeless. When Fanny Kemple offered to give dramatic readings for the benefit of the poor of Lenox, she received a short answer from the town fathers: “There are no poor in Lenox.” In this sturdily Republican county, the Berkshire Eagle, which is the single newspaper of importance, supported Truman in ’48, Eisenhower in ’52 and Stevenson in ’56. And each of the little towns in the area is sharply specific, differing in atmosphere, temperament and architecture from its neighbor, which may be only four or five miles away. Thus Lenox is a town of grand manners; Lee, a tough little mill town that still remains small-town and charmingly unassuming; and Stockbridge is essentially the colonial village it has always been.
Shadowbrook was technically in Stockbridge. The village center lies down at the far end of The Bowl in a tri-cornered valley formed by Rattlesnake to the north, Monument Mountain to the southwest and Bear Mountain to the south. It is perhaps more historically rich than Lenox, for its life has always been unquestionably its own, and it has a long and enviable record. Whereas Lenox was the resort center, and for years its annals were necessarily concerned with names and doings which were not the names and doings native to the Berkshires.

Situated on a kind of plateau at the far northeast corner of The Bowl, the view from the center of Lenox was once expansive. From the porches of the fashionable Curtis Hotel, one could see down to Mahkeenac and beyond to Stockbridge Mountain. But trees planted on the various estates have grown up and blocked the vista, so that today the square in front of the Curtis has an enclosed and modest aspect. There are three main streets: one, running at right angles to the Curtis and back behind it, goes to Lee; another, running down into the valley, leads to Stockbridge, and a third, called West Street from its direction, runs off across the top of The Bowl and through the cleft between Stockbridge and Baldhead Mountains over to the Richmond valley. Before the trees grew up, Lenox sat on her lofty plateau, like a matriarch, mistress of all the outlandish domes, turrets and arches of the estates which lined West Street and the road to Stockbridge. And, though Shadowbrook lies over the Stockbridge line, from its earliest days it paid its obeisance to Lenox. Stockbridge might collect her taxes, but Lenox was her address. There was, I think, more to this than the geographical fact that Shadowbrook was closer to Lenox. It was more than likely a function of the importance, stressed many times by Bertie Wooster’s aunt, of a good address. And too, Shadowbrook’s telephone exchange has always been the Lenox exchange.

The telephone exchange in Lenox is a small, glass-fronted office facing the main road to Lee and opposite the Curtis Hotel. One room, divided by a wallboard partition against which the banks of switchboards are set, and with two rather commonplace oak desks towards the front, it would look very much like a small-town real estate office, except that its front door is kept
locked and curtains drawn over the plate-glass windows. In the busy summer season, particularly during the Tanglewood Music Festival, all of the switchboards are operating and they handle calls placed to every part of the country. For Lenox still retains something of her reputation and the Tanglewood concerts have given her a new lease on gaiety; but in the Berkshire winter it returns to the same small town it has always remained throughout its long history. Make no mistake: millionaires made it a playground and left it, artists and writers have mooned around its hills and meadows, tourists in bright shorts have wandered into Hagyard’s drug store and asked for aspirin in every known American and European accent—but they have left the character of Lenox untouched; for, after all, it is a Berkshire town. The summer aspect of the town would, no doubt, startle old Judge Sedgwick, should he return, but once he accepted the fact that his courthouse where he had reigned, a nabob of justice, had been converted to a library, he would recognize that, with the addition of some claptrap mechanical conveniences, Lenox from November through May was the same Lenox he knew and helped to make. And the brain of this town, as it is of most small towns, is the telephone exchange.

The operators of small-town manual switchboards perform the functions of personal secretary for the whole town. I believe that the telephone company for this reason is finding decided opposition to progress. When it desires to install the efficient but soulless dial-system in towns where people have grown used to the luxury of having an operator whom they know and who knows them, it has faced determined resistance. A city man, used to regarding a telephone impersonally, might be startled on asking for a Doctor Smith’s number in Lenox to hear a cheery voice say, “Doctor is over at the Jones farm. Their boy cut his leg quite badly, I hear, on the saw. Do you want me to see if I can get Doctor Brown? Or if it’s an emergency and you want Doctor Smith, I’ll try him at Jones’.” The city man might be startled, perhaps resentful, but small-town people like it.

On the night of March 10th only one operator was on duty at the Lenox exchange. She was Mary Shalley, a pleasant-faced, matronly looking woman who has lived in Lenox all her
life. She had been a telephone operator on the Lenox exchange before her marriage to John Shalley, who was selectman in Lenox for a good number of years, and after her husband’s death she returned to her former post.

In the middle of the winter night the telephone exchange is a lonely place and the calls few indeed in a proper living town like Lenox.

A few minutes after twelve-thirty a light came on on the board. It was an extremely puzzling one—587. Now that was the special line which the Air Craft Warning people had rigged up two years ago at the Shadowbrook novitiate. It used to burn frequently during the night when Shadowbrook had maintained a twenty-four-hour watch; but since last September, night watches had been discontinued and the light had never once burned after dark since then. She plugged it in, but could get no answer to her “Number please.” This was very strange. Something could go wrong mechanically, of course—wind could cross a line, but there was very little wind tonight. She kept trying for some minutes and then 85 burned on. That was the regular house number at Shadowbrook. Someone had evidently been trying on the other line and when he couldn’t get through walked downstairs to the main phone. She couldn’t remember when a call had been placed so late out of the novitiate. It must be an emergency of some sort.

She plugged in 85. Again she could hear nothing—a static riding over a blank hum, nothing more. The conviction grew that something was wrong at Shadowbrook. Over and over she repeated, “Number please.” And then, “Can I help you?” For almost three minutes there was no answer. She thought of plugging in the police, but some faint background noises which sounded different than mere static kept her on the line. Over and over she repeated, “Can I help you?” She picked up another plug and was about to ring the police when suddenly she heard a faint but distinct voice, “It’s filling with smoke!” She said, “I’ll call the fire department.” “Thank God! I must go now.” And the receiver clicked into place.

Mary rang the fire house which is only two doors down from the exchange and at the same time she plugged in the special telephone that lay on the night table in the bedroom of Oscar R.
the Shadowbrook Fire

Hutchinson, Senior, the fire chief of the town of Lenox.

Oscar Hutchinson has been fire chief since the brigade was formed in 1909, following a disastrous fire on Easter Sunday in the center of the town. He is a large man, slow moving and deliberate in his speech, but his record as a fire fighter is highly thought of among Lenox people. Years of habit have made it a reflex for him to wake fully alert, his hand reaching for the receiver at the first ring of the night phone. He answered simultaneously with Eddie (“Cap”) Conklin, who was on duty at the firehouse.

Mary Shalley spoke quickly: “I just got a call from Shadowbrook. It’s on fire!” Cap Conklin didn’t believe her. To a Lenox man the old Stokes mansion was part of the countryside—one did not expect unmannerly conduct from the Lenox countryside. It was as if she had announced that Baldhead had erupted like Vesuvius. Instinctively he said, “Aw, you’re kidding, Mary.” But Hutchinson cut in, his voice fuzzy with sleep: “Take the Buffalo and get down there, Cap. I’ll be right over.”

Ed Conklin went to work immediately. He pulled the alarm whistle, jumped into the small Buffalo ladder truck and drove, wheels screaming, out of the firehouse, made a sharp left turn and shot down the incline of West Street toward Shadowbrook.

Conklin in his haste blew the whistle incorrectly. Instead of indicating a fire at the novitiate, it actually blew “25” which was the signal for the section adjacent to Shadowbrook and which included the Tanglewood property. When the fire whistle goes off at night it starts a flood of phone calls. Volunteers, swinging out of bed, rush to the phone to find out where precisely they are called. People who are worried about their property, the curious, the excitable, the concerned, all reach for their phones. Mary Shalley started handling a jammed switchboard and the traffic would continue for two more hectic days.

The calls with first priority, of course, were those from Chief Hutchinson. One to his son, who is Deputy Chief of Lenox, ordering him to get down to the firehouse and get out the large La France truck; one to Chief Stockwell of Stockbridge, who was Hutchinson’s own deputy for twenty-seven years before taking
the Stockbridge post. He would be the man in charge of the fire fighting since Shadowbrook lay over the Stockbridge line. And one to his own subsidiary station at Lenoxdale. Then he hung up, dressed, rushed out to the chief’s car and drove off towards the center of town.

Mary Shalley reported to the Pittsfield exchange that there was a fire at Shadowbrook, so that they could take care of anyone calling in that area merely to find out information. Miss Iola Drum, who is the supervisor of the Lenox exchange, was awakened by the fire whistle and phoned in to Mary to find out what the trouble was. When she discovered that the fire was at Shadowbrook, she realized that extra help on the switchboard would be needed before the night was out. She asked Mary to call the operators and ask for volunteers. The entire winter staff—Cora Mackey, Phyllis Leydet and Helen Albert—all reported and stayed throughout the night handling calls that soon began to come in from all parts of the country.

Over at Cranwell everyone was in bed. After a school day in the middle of March when the exhausting proximity to energetic boarding students has gone on for months, the fathers and scholastics sleep soundly indeed. Only one man heard the alarm. Brother Kelly sat up in bed and counted the signal. It sounded to him something like the Shadowbrook signal, but it had been so many years since he had lived at Shadowbrook he was no longer sure. He got out of bed and walked downstairs to the phone. When he had his fears confirmed by Mary Shalley he ran up to the minister’s room and shook Father Lawrence Ryan awake.

Father Larry Ryan is the oldest of the four Ryan brothers in the province, one of whom, as we said, was Father Martin Ryan, who probably at the moment his brother was being shaken awake was tying sheets together in Father Carroll’s room.

The father of the Ryan brothers had been a fireman for forty years and all of the Ryans are something of fire enthusiasts. Father Larry is the most confirmed addict of them all. In fact, even if it had not been Shadowbrook, but promised to be a big fire, it is probable that Brother Kelly, knowing his minister, would have awakened him. The minister in a house of the Society is the
man in charge of the practical details. He is the one to look out for food, supplies and maintenance for all the intellectual drones of the hive whose natural impracticability has been cosseted by years of dependent living. So when Father Ryan heard the news of a fire at Shadowbrook his mind began immediately churning with detail! First, of course, he must go over and find out how bad it was; then should it be really serious and the community burned out, there would be need for shelter. The Cranwell gymnasium would be large enough, perhaps, but where would he find beds for one hundred and fifty men?

All this while he was shrugging into his clothes. He told Brother Kelly to wake the rector of Cranwell, Father Keane, and let him know the news: “Tell him, too, that I’ve gone over there and that I’ll call him up when I find out how bad it is and what has to be done.”

He snatched a flashlight off his desk and the keys for two of the house cars. On the way out he stopped into the room of Father Burke, the headmaster of the academy, woke him up and asked him to get dressed and take the other car to Shadowbrook.

In all this activity there was inevitably something of the excitement proper to a dedicated fire buff. Father Ryan did not yet know how bad the Shadowbrook fire was, and though he was urgent and more than usually concerned by the realization that this fire involved people who were close to him, still the realization was blurred by his activity, and it was with an undercurrent of faintly pleasurable thrill that he hurried out onto the back porch.

Here he looked west just before stepping off to cross the yard to where the cars were parked, and abruptly his mood changed. Off to the left where in autumn and winter the sunsets could be seen burning through the stand of fir which bordered the front lawn of the Cranwell property, the sky was alight. It looked like one of those sunsets. And it was now for the first time that a sense of dread entered his consciousness, for now he first remembered that his brother Marty lived at Shadowbrook. With something very like terror he backed out the car and sent it hurtling along the narrow road heedless of the hard-packed icy snow.
Ten years ago Dave Herrick started a furniture store in his native Lenox. He bought an old Congregational church which stood on the short street that runs behind the Curtis and parallel to Main Street. The old church was adequate to his needs. He knocked out the front walls and installed plate glass, and the ground floor of the church has served satisfactorily as a showroom ever since. But it is a very crowded showroom—and what with the differing tastes of summer people and permanent residents, he has had to stock everything, from the most antiseptic little thing of bent pipe and plastic to plump mohair affairs whose billing is “traditional American.” Dave has not done badly but his ancient wooden store, chock-a-block with expensive combustibles, has given him some uneasy nights. Rarely does the fire signal go off at night without Dave Herrick sitting up in his bed, counting.

Tonight, though, he was already awake. The rest of the family had gone to bed, but he had decided to stay up reading. He heard the whistle, of course, and with relief he recognized it as some other district than the center of town. Curiously he stepped outside. The sky off to the west was bright and glowing. It looked like Tanglewood or Shadowbrook, and certainly it was one “helluva” fire. He went in and called the operator. Mary Shalley told him that it was Shadowbrook and that she had just learned that it was quite serious. Quickly he became concerned; many of the fathers at the novitiate were friends of his. He was head of the Shadowbrook Drive in Lenox. He tried briefly to wake his wife, but she was sleeping soundly. She would probably be irritated in the morning that he did not wake her, for her concern would be, if anything, greater than his; but he decided to let her sleep. He grabbed a jacket and set out in his car toward West Street.

The engines had begun to arrive when he drove up to the fork by the Shadowbrook gatehouse, and the road was very icy. He parked a little way up the hill on the Richmond road and got out. Almost immediately he slipped and fell on the ice. He fell twice more while teetering down Rosary Lane before he turned the corner by the lamppost and saw the flames now towering out of the western wing and the crowded driveway where silhouetted figures were rushing about.

The Red Cross had begun its annual drive for funds in
Berkshire County shortly before this, towards the beginning of March. Miss Anna Mahony ("Yes, no e. That’s the proper Irish spelling!") is the executive director of the Berkshire chapter. She is a Boston girl originally and a graduate of the old Teachers’ College who abandoned the classroom for professional Red Cross service. She served throughout the war in Alaska and the Pacific Theatre. That night she had attended a fund meeting in Lenox and only returned to her home in Lee, where she lives with her mother, some parakeets and a cocker spaniel, some time after eleven. Some people might find fund meetings dull and exhausting, but Anna Mahony — without the e — is a girl who thrives on all aspects of organizational work. Still she was tired with a quiet, replete sort of weariness—the meeting had not gone badly at all—and she went to bed soon after coming in.

It did not seem long afterwards that she heard the telephone in the downstairs hall ringing away. She got up and answered it. It was Gert Cuddler (Mrs. Gertrude), who is the lady in charge of volunteers in the county. Mrs. Cuddler had been called by Mrs. Tillotson, the branch chairwoman of the Red Cross in Lenox. Mrs. Tillotson, herself, had been awakened by her daughter who saw the sky glow out her window, and she had found out from the phone operator what the trouble was. Mrs. Tillotson had called Mrs. Cuddler to tell her that she was going to organize the Lenox branch for relief work and asked her to get in touch with Anna Mahony, for it would be Anna’s decision that could bring in the Red Cross on a county basis.

Miss Mahony knew that the Lee operators customarily monitored her calls at night so she asked the operator to confirm the news. Calls had already begun in Lee and the operator was well informed. She told her it was true and that the fire was, no doubt of it, very serious, that the entire community would probably be burned out. Miss Mahony’s mind, after years of specialized thinking, moved immediately into the proper organizational grooves.

According to the Red Cross charter, granted by Congress, there are two types of disasters: individual and institutional. The first type is “compulsory,” that is, the Red Cross is legally bound by virtue of its official establishment to offer relief when some
tragedy of disaster proportions strikes individual citizens. It must move to provide shelter, food, clothing and do what is possible toward rehabilitating the individual, restoring him to the state he was in before the disaster as far as that is humanly possible. In the case of institutions, however, the Red Cross may or may not, as it sees fit and the ability of the institution to provide for itself appears, offer its services. Fire at Shadowbrook clearly was a “permissive” type of disaster. And how were the funds at this moment? The policy of the Red Cross is always to pay for the food and clothing it provides during disaster, never to impose on the generosity of merchants, and so that question had some point.

These were automatic instinctive preliminaries to decision, neatly filed thoughts. They went through her mind in a single swift riffle, and with barely a pause she said to Mrs. Cuddler: “All right, Gert, we’ll go in. Get out the service wagon. It’s parked at Mrs. Moser’s. I’ll be right over as soon as I can organize things around here. You go down to Shadowbrook and try and set up a canteen.”

She immediately made a phone call to alert the Lee group of workers, then hurried through her dressing—regulation uniform, of course. As she drove through Lee, she stopped at an all-night diner to place an order for all the coffee they could make. And driving off, she felt the customary internal glow which told her that everything for now was shipshape, that another shapeless, untidy tragedy was about to yield to a good woman’s talent for battening the hatches.

The Goulds had not been asleep. Since their retirement to Mahkeenac Farm they had found it more comfortable to follow any whimsical schedule they chose, and tonight they had both stayed up reading. The “25” signal startled them for it meant a fire either at Tanglewood or their own property. Mrs. Gould ran to the back window on the third floor which looked out toward Tanglewood. The winter night was undisturbed. Her husband, who had run to the front of the house, was calling her, and she went along the corridor quickly, afraid that their hay barn which faced the Shadowbrook gatehouse had somehow caught fire. But it was further over.

From where they stood at the third-floor window the
flickering red sky through a pattern of black, bare trees was a baneful Walpurgisnacht fantasy. And they knew now where the fire was. Bundling quickly into coats, they set off together down Rosary Lane.

The fire truck came along the lane before they reached the house; and when they finally turned into the driveway before the house, Cap Conklin had already set the ladder up against the northwest corner and a man in shorts was being helped down. A broken rope of sheets dangled out of one of the other windows. Father Corcoran had just climbed down from his window and came running across the area towards them on his way to get the cars from the garage.

Mr. Gould ran over to help with the ladder, but Mrs. Gould stopped Father Corcoran. “Is there anything I can do to help?” “Yes,” he said, “get sandwiches and coffee. The kids will need something hot, and there’ll be more firemen, I suppose.”

The Gould home was soon the scene of great activity. One of the first to arrive was Iola Drum. She had been to the exchange and decided that, in order properly to coordinate the movements of the fire fighters and rescue squads and to keep information flowing, a communication center close to the fire would be necessary. Two telephone lines come into the Gould farm, and if they would consent she would have all calls that needed immediate reply by someone at the fire itself routed through them. Mrs. Gould, from the midst of her sandwich fashioning, gave a brusque consent.

Mrs. Cuddler, driving down in the disaster wagon, had also thought of the Goulds’. It would be ideal as a base of operations for the Red Cross. When she arrived she found the kitchen humming and sent word that they would use this place as their center.

Continually throughout the night, people were coming and going. Red Cross workers, uniformed and un-uniformed, policemen from almost every town in the vicinity as well as state police, civil defense people from Pittsfield, reporters looking for a phone, the curious, the cold, they all came through the farmhouse at some time or other. Byrne Bauer, the manager of the Red Lion Inn, left his pile of blankets here before he rushed back to open
his hotel. Anna Mahony alighted here several times between organizing flights, encouraging and congratulating. And over it all rang the voice of Mrs. Gould (nee Higginson), imperious, tart, urgent with concern.

When some time afterward those fathers who knew her for one of the grand dames of Yankeedom watched her hobbling over the ice along Rosary Lane, shawled like some old peasant woman, and bent under the weight of two immense pots of coffee, with tears running down her cheeks, they saw her as a moving symbol of the old, never exhausted mystery of human kindness.

John Mahanna is an old Lenox boy and presently County Editor of the Berkshire Eagle. He was the first newspaperman to get the story which soon was headlines as far away as Japan. A Lenox woman had looked out of her bedroom window at twelve forty-five and decided that Tanglewood was on fire. She called Mahanna at his home. He thanked her and went to look for himself. It was hard to understand how the Tanglewood shed with all that steel in its construction could be causing such a glow, but he called his photographers and reporters and sent them to West Street. “It’s something in that area anyway.” Then he checked with Mary Shalley:

“Oh, no, John, it isn’t Tanglewood. It’s Shadowbrook. This is terrible. They are jumping out of windows and many are on the ledges and can’t get to the ground. I don’t know how many are trapped. Maybe six or seven are dead by now. Ambulances from all over are on the way.”

That did it: it was a story and a big one. He called the city and news editors of the Eagle, and it was agreed to send a whole corps of reporters to Shadowbrook and let them dig up the side-lights and special stories. The feature news story could be handled by the regular reporter of the Lenox-Lee-Stockbridge area, Frank McCarty. The decision was a good one. The Eagle is an evening paper and for that reason, of course, McCarty had an advantage over his more driven brothers from the Boston and New York papers and the boys from the wire services, but the fact remains that the most comprehensive, careful and readable account of the nationwide story was carried under his by-line in the Eagle.

The Pittsfield police and fire departments had been
notified; and Sgt. Mike Woitkowski alerted every news source in the area. “I knew they could use all the help they could get in covering a story this big.” And from that time on the Lenox exchange was clotted first with calls from nervous voices demanding “the story,” and then toward morning, from voices, pathetically anxious, of relatives and friends just demanding news.

Woitkowski also roused Mayor Harvey of Pittsfield, who came down to Shadowbrook and stayed until morning, and William L. Plouffe, chief of civil defense in Pittsfield. Plouffe unleashed his whole organization and expressed great gratification the next day with the numbers and efficiency of their response. There was, in fact, little that they could do by the time they arrived.

For by the time they arrived, the fire was leaping from every window and bounding along the entire length of the structure, all who were saved were already out of the building, and there were many more fire hoses than there was water to fill them. Much of the equipment and most of the volunteers who came skidding along the frozen roads were inevitably forced into the position of being mere friends of the deceased, comforting by presence rather than actual assistance. The great concourse that stood and watched from the slope of Baldhead behind the house was there for the most part to demonstrate how deeply the old Stokes house had entered the affections of Berkshire County and how much, without realization, I think, on either part, the Jesuits and the Berkshires had over the years grown fond of one another. And the people of the County had only just begun to demonstrate that fondness.